









**A FRATERNAL GROUP TAKEN AT THE MOSQUE, WOKING**

Mr. Arthur Shareef Dalrymple, whose declaration of faith appears on the opposite page, is seated second from the right. Mr. Harith el-Faruqi of al-Jammi'iyat Islamiyah, Palestine, is sitting first from the left.

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Dear Brother,

Peace be with you !

I hope you will not think my conversion a matter of form. This would be far from the truth. Almighty Allah is my witness that I am not a hypocrite, and I shall try to deserve His guidance and to be a true Muslim, and I feel myself already strengthened by my prayers and my belief.

I was very grateful to you for the letter and the literature that you have sent me. The book, "THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM", has been a great help to me in finding out the Truth.

Yours fraternally,

ARTHUR FORBES DALRYMPLE

Greville Road,  
London.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXV. ]

ZU'L-HIJJA, 1355 A.H.

MARCH, 1937 A.C.

[ No. 3.

## A DECLARATION

I, Arthur Evan Forbes Dalrymple, of Greville Road, London, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

*La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah*

(There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.)

(Sd.) ARTHUR SHAREEF FORBES DALRYMPLE.

## EID-UL-FITR SERMON

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

“ And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying : ‘ Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt, and make your houses places of worship, and keep up Prayer, and give good news to the Believers.’

And Moses said : ‘ Our Lord ! Surely Thou hast given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world’s life, to this end, our Lord, that they lead (people) astray from Thy way : Our Lord ! destroy their riches and assault their hearts so that they believe not until they see the painful chastisement.’

He said : ‘ The Prayer of you both has indeed been accepted ; therefore, continue in the right way, and do not follow the path of those who do not know ! ’ ” (Ch. xv, 87—89.)

We are celebrating to-day the Eid-ul-Fitr, or the festival of the breaking of the fast. Fasting during the month of Ramadan, from dawn to sunset, is one of the five pillars of Islam. And, God be praised, so many of us in this country, belonging to different races and countries, have been able to observe this sacred institution this year. “ Festival ” signifies some pleasure and happiness, but the world scarcely knows the nature of Muslim happiness. Our happiness to-day does not result from our having finished a period of restraint and starvation. Neither does it arise out of a consciousness that we are able to exhibit a definite measure of forbearance. On the contrary, it arises out of our realisation that even the power to obey the ordinances of God comes from God. Even the slightest feeling of independence of God savours of polytheism in Islam. The folly of egotistic consciousness has to disappear completely in the realisation of the Divine Unity. It is for this reason that we

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say in every Prayer :

“THEE ALONE DO WE SERVE, AND THEE ALONE DO WE BESEECH FOR HELP.” Alas ! Christendom, while talking at length about the Love of God, misses this all-important point concerning the spiritual self-realization of man.

So it is that our happiness and pleasure seek an altogether different mode of expression from the pleasure and the happiness of the other communities of the world. At the climax of all our joys, we cry “Allah’o Akbar”—“God is the Greatest” and the final expression of our feelings is in humble prostration. We feel at our happiest in the year on the occasions of the *Eids*, and we are asked to express that happiness by assembling for an extra Prayer.

I have read to you from our Holy Book a passage which relates to the time of Pharaoh and the Prophet Moses. Remember, the Qur-án relates these stories not so much as facts of history but rather as warnings and assurances to its followers in the course of their spiritual struggles as individuals and as a nation. Do not think for a moment that the story of Pharaoh is merely a story of the past. The maxim that history repeats itself is far more true of the spiritual history of humanity than of its political history. We are, in fact, living in an age which has gathered and demonstrated to the full all those devilish tendencies which the human race has exhibited differently in different ages. It is, indeed, remarkable that the fate of Islam as a religion to-day is very similar to the condition of Judaism under the Pharaoh. We should not misunderstand the situation because there is no physical persecution. It does not appear from the story that Pharaoh openly persecuted any Jew because of his adherence to the Jewish faith, or for obeying its ordinances. Even in their political subjection, the Jews were allowed

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such freedom in their religious observances as we Muslims of several countries have under one or other of the imperialistic nations of Europe. The religious persecution that necessitated the rise of Moses among them appears to be of an altogether different kind, as is shown by the verses I have quoted. It consisted of a contempt of religion arising from an arrogance born of a material prosperity and accompanied by a pagan outlook on life. Pray do not be deceived by the fact that the current civilisation has the stamp of a revealed religion, called Christianity. I affirm that this fact makes its paganism all the more dangerous for the people of religion. In spite of all its allegiance to Jesus and his religion, Christendom has inherited the traditions of all the pagan nations of old, and its contemptuous treatment of the only true religious movement has almost achieved its object, so that the soul of religion in the shape of Islam is indeed crying in its agony: "Our Lord! Surely Thou hast given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life, to this end, our Lord, that they lead people astray from Thy way."

This contemptuous treatment, we should remember, comes often in the form of an undisguised opposition and then it is comparatively less dangerous. At other times, however, it comes in the guise of friendly and sympathetic admonition, and as such it is the most dangerous. An example of this insidious attack was recently furnished by the *Weekly Illustrated* of London. It wrote: "Ramadan in the old days meant comparatively little sacrifice. The Bedouins slept all day long in their tents. Nowadays, in a world not organised on Muslim lines, it involves a serious dislocation of the ordinary activities of life. Many, sympathetic to Islam, say that, in the modern world, the Fast is hardly practicable." (*Vide* its issue for Saturday, December 5th, 1936.)

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I do not know what the Editor means when he refers to the Bedouins. Is the history of Islam the history of the Bedouins sleeping in their tents? One cannot help feeling sorry for an Editor who does not know that, within one hundred years of the rise of Islam, Islamised Arabia was at "Granada on the one hand, and at Delhi on the other, glowing in life and vigour and the light of genius," and that Islam became the religion of very many nations of the world who, one after another, kept the torch of civilization burning for many centuries, when Christianity was the religion of nations, historically, unborn or defunct. Nor does the learned Editor realise that the purpose of the Ramadan is to keep the usual activities going in spite of hunger and thirst. It is only in this struggle that the object of fasting is achieved. This object, it is hardly necessary to remind you, is the subordination of the body to the mind. In usual circumstances, our mind follows the desires of the flesh. There is no real harm in the mind's attending to the necessities of the body, but then the body, as often as not, demands things detrimental to the growth and development of the spirit. Therefore, a training has to be received by which the mind learns to assert its individuality, and can control the body whenever it tries to override the mind. That being the object, it is not expected that any dislocation of the ordinary activities should take place. However, granting for the sake of argument that a slight dislocation does take place in the course of the struggle of the mind against the body, such a dislocation is far better than the unperceived, but enormous, dislocation that must be taking place as the result of our over-eating and over-drinking, which is a common feature of modern life. It is certainly a thousand times better than that horrible dislocation which was brought about by the last Great War—a result of the helplessness of the spiritual aspirations of man at the hands of the physical passions. Every

European—German, French or English—knows that international warfare is a huge folly and a sin. And yet, when passions rise high, when geographical patriotism—which is only a magnified desire of the flesh—is aroused by jealousy or hatred, the beastliness of the national mind cannot be controlled by the idealistic sense of neighbourly duty. In view of this is it not necessary that the nations of the world should follow a system like that of Ramadan that periodically gives training to the mind how to overcome the storms of passion? Instead, therefore, of our needing any sympathy from our Christian friends, they need all our sympathy for their not realising this great necessity in our socio-moral life. Indeed, this failure on the part of the Christian leaders of thought is all the more pitiful when we recall how Jesus, whom they regard as their Saviour, and whose personality is proclaimed by the Neo-Christians as the central point of the Christian religion, fasted for forty days before he started his ministry. In criticising the practice of fasting among Muslims, therefore, our Christian friends are evidently ridiculing the personality of Jesus. But who cares? As I have remarked, lip-allegiance to Christianity is only a mask behind which paganism is playing its dirtiest game of all ages. Had our Christian friends but known! But how long will this go on? Have we not been praying to God in the manner of the Prophet Moses for the last two centuries to save us from the temptations of this Godless and soul-killing civilisation? Has not its deceptive brilliance already created sufficient havoc in the ranks of the Believers? Have not its intellectual onslaughts paganised the minds of a considerable section of our rising generation? Have, then, all our prayers been in vain? Believers! Be of good cheer! When the darkness is the thickest, the sun is nearest to the Eastern horizon. Observe carefully, and you will find the idol

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of Western civilisation fast collapsing. Geneva, which was an imitation of, and tried to supersede, Mecca as the centre of a world-fellowship of nations, has failed, and failed in a most disgraceful manner. Just as one feels ashamed to look at one's nude body, the nations composing the League of Nations are themselves ashamed of its failure. Meanwhile, that sacred League of Nations, of which the foundations were laid at Mecca by Muhammad, the Prophet of God, has been going from strength to strength all these centuries, in spite of all the ups and downs in the life of the Muslim Community. Nay, it has received new vigour of late. After a brief lapse, the intelligentsia and the leading figures of the Muslim World have started taking an active interest in this the most solemn of all institutions. And what is more, even the West has started sending its annual quota of pilgrims to this sacred assembly. Indeed, the time does not seem distant when the hub of human social life will be again transferred from materialistic Western Europe to spiritualistic Western Asia—the meeting-point of the three great continents.

If, however, the League of Nations was the political catch-word of this deluded and deluding band of world guides, its assiduously cultivated and developed science of economics was also a subtle move to divert the aspirations of man from heaven to earth. Social problems, it was claimed, were no longer to be referred to the unsensuous experiences of the spiritual life, but to the tangible appetites of the body for things which the physical world alone can supply. It is necessary to bear in mind that the Muslims never neglected the study of this particular science, but it is true that it was not given one-tenth part of the importance which it has acquired among the leaders of Western civilisation. The reason is obvious. Muslims never believed, nor can they believe

even now, that economics is the chief factor in our social relationship. They knew, as they know now, that there are far superior senses in man than the economic, and that an appeal to those senses is necessary, not only in the interests of our social life, but also in the interests of our very economic existence. For the ultimate solution of all social problems, therefore, they looked not downwards to the dark and dead earth, but upwards towards the brilliant and life-giving heaven. The fathers of this science in Europe did not, in the beginning, announce that economics was to replace God for purposes of worship, yet, when it reached its maturity, it itself announced its own objective, and that in no mistakable terms. In spite of what the unenlightened may think of the attitude of economics towards religion, those who have followed the philosophy of that movement know well that *its* theory of life is the denial of the *religious* theory of life. It will be wrong to think, however, that Communism, or the science of Economics, originated the anti-God movement. I should prefer to say that it was the consummation of the pagan attitude towards life, the beginnings of which it is difficult to trace in European history. Perhaps it started as early as the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the Christian Faith. It was, in fact, a reaction to the oppressive and unwarranted demands of the Church on the normal capacity of the human mind. Nevertheless, if the pagan outlook on life attained its consummation in the philosophy of Communism, it also reached the point where all evils produce their own weapons of destruction. The weapon which has been produced by Communism, the one which has been threatening its own life is, as we know, Fascism. Thus the evil intention which was conceived against God by the so-called science of Economics has at last recoiled on itself. It has not harmed the votaries of God and religion half as much as the votaries of this so-called

science. The beleagured cities of Spain, however horrible in their appearance, have, nevertheless, a message for the Believers from this point of view.

If, however, the political and economic sides of the civilisation passing under the name of Jesus Christ have exposed themselves in all their shamelessness, its socio-moral life has also reached an awful depth of shame and hypocrisy, on account of the insincere lead given to it by a system condemned by its own professed standards. Jesus disdained all political power and glory. His kingdom was avowedly not of this world. Yet, almost from the beginning, the Church has been actively engaged in the acquisition of political power and glory, and the states of all the different countries of Europe have had to wage a ruthless war against it to curb its inordinate ambition. Shorn of all real power in the political field and devoid of any initiative, it has at the present moment the melancholy satisfaction of opposing any change—good, bad or indifferent. The same glaring inconsistency is to be found in the economic outlook of the Church. Although the Master had said: “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,” the Church has always been found on the side of the rich aristocracy. Small wonder is it that, whenever there has been a rebellion of the “have-nots” against the “haves,” the Church has suffered the same fate as the aristocracy of wealth. Let the Muslims remember in thankfulness that, even if their aristocracy has at times been negligent of the Mosques, their poorer sections have always clung to their religion with the greatest earnestness.

Equally untenable is the position of the Church in its attitude towards legislation. Every sensible student of the New Testament will readily admit that the exhortations of Jesus were never intended to form the basis of

any law. All that the Master wanted was that the followers of the Jewish law should not be contented with the observation of the letter, but should go deeper and observe also the spirit of the law. Unfortunately, the Church missed the whole purport of the mission of the Master, and came to regard the law as itself a curse. Moreover, it tried to formulate laws on the basis of the very meagre guidance furnished by the sermons of Jesus. The legislators, therefore, had, of necessity, to draw upon pagan sources to make a practicable code of Laws. What a disaster it has proved to the moral life of the people following these laws is well known to all serious students of the situation. In all points of social morality, the Church is found swallowing camels and straining at gnats. Take, for instance, the case of marriage laws. The Church is so inexorable on the matter of divorce that, with great difficulty, the State could allow it only on the ground of misconduct. Further, even if the State would grant divorce, the Church would not marry a divorced person. As a result, the social atmosphere is surcharged with stories of misconduct, supposed or real. Strangely enough, although the Church is so furious against divorce, it seems prepared to condone any amount of sexual immorality, public or private. The Christian laws have no punishment for this most serious of all social offences. Indeed, the absurdity of this position has become so glaring that it has moved the very shrine of conservatism and orthodoxy in this most conservative of Christian countries: I mean the Crown. The abdication of King Edward is, therefore, an event of great significance to us Muslims.

And what about the Church itself? Is it complacently carrying on with its hypocritical programme? We are glad to be able to notice that the declaration of its spiritual bankruptcy has been forthcoming now from its own representatives. Only the

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other day, the ex-Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Inge, told the world in so many words that he could not persuade himself to believe that Prayer could in any way interfere with the course of events. No clearer indication of the realisation by the Church of its own futility is, indeed, needed.

So the Pharaoh of this Godless Western civilization, with all his paraphernalia, that has been sitting like a nightmare on the soul of Islam, is almost on the point of drowning. It is, indeed, an occasion for great thanksgiving as it brings a great and well-earned relief to the Believers all over the world. Across this great deluge which is overtaking humanity, the followers of Muhammad can see the safe landing of the forces of religion and belief, escorted by the unfailing teachings of the Holy Qur-án. It is, indeed, the most thrilling point in the history of our religion. The import of the Divine assurance, "Therefore continue in the right way," was never before as clear to us as it is to-day. We feel like crying out in spiritual zeal: "God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest! There is no object of worship except God! God is the Greatest, and to God is due all praise!"

Is this *all* that is required of us Believers at this the greatest turning-point in our history? Should we be content with the sense of safety that the impending collapse of this soul-killing civilization affords? I am afraid that would be the greatest misunderstanding of our position in relation to humanity. We must recall that it was at the time of a similar crisis for the world-civilization that Islam took its birth, and that this religion undertook to collect the dying germs of civilization from all over the world, and, nursing them back to life, safely escorted them through the stormy times of the Middle Ages, during which this very religion of Christianity had been upholding ignorance and superstition and

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ruthlessly crushing everything that was likely to foster enlightenment and scientific thought in the minds of the people.

Now that the self-same civilization is once more in danger, it is for the Muslims to form themselves into a salvage corps as before and to come to its rescue with all their spiritual resources. The responsibility of the Muslims was, indeed, never as great as it is to-day. Their spiritual powers are going to be put to the crucial test. They have to act as the builders of a new world out of a huge mass of wreckage. It is necessary, therefore, that we make our houses, to use the words of the Qur-án, "places of worship," in a manner that perhaps we have never done before.

I cannot too much emphasize, that the future of humanity will depend on the amount of spiritual energy we shall have stored in our minds. Thus it is very pertinent that we ask ourselves in all seriousness how much energy we have stored during this sacred month of Ramadan, which saw the start of the Qur-ánic revelation, and of which we are assembled here to-day to celebrate the end.

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## SACRIFICE IN ISLAM

BY WAHEED AHMED KHAN, M.A., LL.B.

The question of sacrifice or rather of the sacrifice of a living being (I use the word in its literal rather than its metaphorical sense) had been troubling me since the time when I seriously began to ponder over the teachings of Islam. An historical retrospect of the rite or practice of sacrifice clearly establishes the fact that in the early stages of man's mental development, he practised this

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rite for appeasing the wrath of his gods in order to gain some material benefit or to drive away calamity. As his mentality developed along with the idea of assuaging the anger of the gods, that of atoning for past sins also became associated with this rite of sacrifice ; and even in these days of enlightenment and culture, there are idol-worshippers who still perform animal, and even human, sacrifices for the above two purposes.

Islam has hit all the ideas of idol-worship hard and strong. It has denounced them all outright. There are no half-ways, haltings or compromises. The stroke is forceful and final. If this is so (and undoubtedly it is so) why has it then sanctioned animal sacrifice ?

The climax was reached when, about a year ago, a strange piece of news was published in some of the Indian newspapers. It was said, if I remember aright, that, probably in Bengal, a religious Muslim had sacrificed or murdered his four-year-old son in his love for God and the Prophet. This shocking news presented to my mind a series of questions which gave me food for serious reflection for some months, and then, with the help of one of my friends, I was, at last, thank God, able to solve them in the light of the Qur-ánic teachings.

The questions which naturally arose in one's mind were :

- (1) What is the significance of animal sacrifice as practised by the Prophets Abraham and Muhammad ? (peace and blessings of God be upon them).
- (2) Is the practice obtaining in Muslim society nowadays in any way defensible ?

In order to answer the first question, it will be convenient to revert to the story of Abraham's dream. It is related that Abraham saw in a dream that God asked him for a sacrifice and thinking that the thing dearest to his heart was intended, he interpreted it to mean

the sacrifice of his son Ishmael, who, till then, being his only son, was undoubtedly dearest to him in this world. Having thus interpreted the significance of his dream he prepared himself to sacrifice Ishmael and was about to cut his (Ishmael's) throat, when he was prevented, by an Inner Call, from doing the act and was bade to sacrifice a ram instead. Animal sacrifice in Islam dates from, and is practised to commemorate this incident in Abraham's life.

Although the incident of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Ishmael, and his actual sacrifice of a ram at the end, at the command of God, as narrated by the Qur-án, has been viewed from different angles and various explanations offered for it, yet no rational basis of explanation has yet been suggested from any quarter of the Muslim world. After all, the practice of animal sacrifice savours, and has, an element of pagan ritual and customs and no explanation has been forthcoming as to why the Holy Prophet of Islam practised it and allowed it to continue. The following is a humble attempt to suggest such a basis and to offer a rational explanation.

If we look into the philosophy of dreams we shall find that in dreams our thoughts which are the progeny of our feelings and emotions come to us in shapes and forms. If we feel thirsty, for instance, the sensation of thirst brings into existence a river or a pitcher or some other object by which we can quench our thirst. In the majority of cases our immediate thoughts assume shapes, but it often happens that the thoughts which had occurred to us years before, but which were kept stored up in our sub-consciousness, assume some form or shape in dreams. It, therefore, follows that our sentiments, emotions or feelings, which generate our thoughts, play a great part in sleep.

Let us now turn to another aspect of human psychology. When any sentiment or emotion dominates the mind of

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man, it carries, so to say, everything before it. If, for example, a man falls a prey to a strong sentiment of anger, he would do things which cannot be called sane, that is to say, his reasoning power and other faculties become stunted so long as anger holds sway over his mind. The same, even more, is the case with the sentiment of love. If allowed to drift to extremes it banishes from the mind all other faculties. The object, or in another sense the subject, of thought is nothing but the beloved. When he sleeps he sees nothing but the beloved and when he awakes nothing is present before his mind's eye except his beloved.

Having considered these two preliminary aspects of human psychology, let us now turn to Abraham's story.

Abraham, as is well known, was really infatuated with the Divine love. This sentiment grew so strong in him that it took complete control over his mind and virtually became a passion with him. In this state of mind he thought it was quite incompatible with his love for the Divine Being that he should give any nook or corner of his heart or mind to any other object. He was prepared to sacrifice everything to make sure that he loved nothing else except God. When the mind is so occupied the same ideas are bound to assume such-like shapes in dreams. It is quite natural, therefore, that he dreamt that he was ordered by his beloved (God) to sacrifice his dearest thing for His sake. He ponders over the dream which is the result of his own ideas and sentiments, and interprets it to be a Divine Commandment for the sacrifice of his son. Having thus interpreted its significance he was not, and could not be, slack in putting it into actual practice. All these sentiments were his personal, human sentiments, the result of an infatuated mind. But the Divine Call which befitted his prophetic self came to *correct* these personal ideas. When he was about to cut his son's

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throat the Inner Call prevented him from doing such an act. It ordered him not to do it; in other words, his Inner Call was *not for* the sacrifice of his son but *definitely against* it. In his infatuation he was about to commit a great blunder, but as his act was based on the sincerity of his feelings, he was, in the nick of time, saved from falling into it.

It is generally supposed that the Qur-ânic verse " And we ransomed him with a great sacrifice " refers to this sacrifice, because Abraham sacrificed a ram afterwards. But this is wrong for a variety of reasons. To begin with, the verse refers not to the *unaccomplished* fact of the sacrifice of Ishmael but to the *accomplished* fact of a sacrifice having actually been made. The reference, therefore, would be, if at all, to the sacrifice of the ram which was actually sacrificed. But the sacrifice of a ram was quite an ordinary thing and could not be called great. Again, when God Himself forbade him to do a thing, He cannot afterwards make a mention of it in such high terms. It is quite clear, therefore, that the verse cannot refer to this occurrence at all.

The history of Abraham, as revealed in the Holy Book, clearly shows that Abraham, in obedience to the Divine Commandment, had exiled himself from his native country of smiling fields and rushing brooks and had taken up his abode along with his family in the desolate, barren and uncultivated land of Arabia with stony ground underfoot and a scorching sun overhead. To banish oneself voluntarily from one's own prosperous country to a land subject to the extremes of the weather, with a young wife and a nursing child, to cut oneself off from all relatives and friends, to say good-bye to all one's property and possessions; in short, to undergo all the troubles and afflictions of a refugee, simply to redeem a backward nation, to better its condition and to elevate its morale, in other words, to effect the complete effacement of one's own self

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for the sake of a country or a nation, is no ordinary affair and can really be called great. The verse refers to this grand and heroic sacrifice of Abraham in the cause of humanity.

From all of which we see that Abraham, under the influence of a *personal* feeling, wanted to sacrifice his son, but that his prophetic self or Inner Call prevented him doing this, and inasmuch as the world is concerned not with the personal feelings of a Prophet but with his prophetic teachings, the example of Abraham clearly teaches us that to sacrifice any human being in the love of God is against the wishes of the Supreme Being.

From a discussion of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son, it is sufficiently clear that the incident has quite the opposite significance from what it is generally supposed to mean. The question now remains of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram and the admitted sacrifice of animals by the Holy Prophet of Islam.

All the teachings of Islam, if looked into closely, aim at the attainment of those moral virtues which entitle a man to be distinguished from the lower creatures. The most important of these virtues is the effacement of his "ego" in the cause of humanity. Man's individual "entity" is nothing before the "collective self" of his race, that is, the human race. He has been taught by Islam to sacrifice his money, property and even his life and family, if the interests of the public demand it. Now this spirit of sacrifice can be infused and kept alive only by instituting those customs and rites, the constant practice of which might lead to this inevitable result. If it be made obligatory to spend a *substantial* portion of one's income every year for the benefit of the needy and the poor, or in any public cause, the spirit of sacrifice can remain alive in man.

Now life in Arabia, from time immemorial, has been that of a herdsman. The only property in that land of

heat and "simoom" is the herd of animals which a man may possess. There are no gardens, no orchards and no fertile fields. The life of the Arabs has been more or less of a nomadic character. Even their merchandise consists of camels or herds of goats and sheep or rams. If, therefore, they are asked to sacrifice these animals to feed the hungry and the poor, it would mean they are asked to sacrifice a good deal of the *sources* of their income. It would be just like telling an Indian to sell a portion of his zamindari to help the needy and the indigent. The sacrifice of animals was not meant to be an empty thing in Arabia. It was ordered there as a very effective way of driving out love of property from men's hearts in the cause of the public at large. In those days an act of very great benevolence would have been the spreading of the feast-carpet for the people, specially the hungry and the poor. And in Arabia, this could not have been done without sacrificing animals, because there were no corn-fields and animal flesh was a dainty for them. The sacrifice of animals was, therefore, ordered with regard to the conditions of the people of Arabia. It was, however, clearly laid down in the Holy Book, in order to blot out all traces of the pagan idea of Divine wrath or pleasure, that their blood or flesh did not reach God Who looks at the motives, that is, to the spirit rather than the form of sacrifice.

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## STRAY THOUGHTS ON ISLAM

### STRAY THOUGHTS ON ISLAM

BY HAJI ABDUL MAJID

In the course of my travels extending over many years, I have had frequent opportunities of discussing religion in a friendly spirit with Christian fellow-travellers of all denominations, who have casually asked for an explanation of some aspect or other of the Islamic faith which had, perhaps, amused or interested them at the moment. These enquiries being evidently made less for the purpose of serious study than from a desire to make conversation, I soon developed the habit of making my replies as short as possible, without sacrificing the main principle underlying each and every subject so discussed and in the following pages it will be noticed that the elucidation of the various points has been greatly influenced by this habit.

It is hoped that these brief dissertations, based as they are on common sense rather than profound religious knowledge, may kindle among Western readers an interest in the faith of Islam. The enquiring mind is referred to more authoritative books on the subject, particularly the Qur-án itself, in its English rendering with the Commentaries thereon by modern Muslim savants.

A religion that is worthy of the name should appeal to reason : no dogma or religious riddle should be tendered to its followers for blind acceptance. The spread of Islam was effected by its Founder and his immediate followers not by the use of the sword, but by the reasonableness of the Islamic doctrines which appealed to the human mind ; otherwise the Arabic saying that " the pen of the scholar is sharper than the sword of the warrior " would not have found currency in Arabic literature.

Now, as then, Islam is offered solely on the merits of its teachings as recorded in the Holy Qur-án which

claims to bring to the world what the very word Islam stands for, and that is Peace !

### Science not Discouraged in Islam

The present apathy of Muslims in regard to scientific discoveries and inventions has led superficial observers to believe that Islam is opposed to the study or promotion of Science. This is indeed very far from the truth. The Qur-án in many verses explains that as Man is the best of all creations, all other creations are subservient to him, if he will only "use his brains," as popular parlance has it. The early Muslims advanced Science in all its branches so enthusiastically that they were the first to discover that the Earth is round, the first to invent paper and gunpowder, and the first to advance medical science, making it possible to achieve its present standard. The names of Averroes and Avicenna, the two great Muslim physicians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era respectively, are, to this day, honoured by students of medicine. Many Arabic words are still used for the names of medicines, and, according to one account, during the heyday of Muslim ascendancy at Baghdad, a certain Muslim, Abu Kasim by name, built the first flying machine that the world ever saw, but unfortunately he was killed in one of his flights. All this should prove that Islam is not against the advancement of Science.

Other minor questions of conduct will be found treated in the Qur-án, and guidance in each and every case given thereto in clear words. Whether the Qur-án gives a complete code of law, as Muslims believe it to do, may be gauged from the fact that in any attempt on the part of any nation in the world to improve their conditions or advance themselves in the name of humanity, they are sure to hit upon some Islamic principles already laid down in the Qur-án, as can be seen from the brief discussions above. Muslims have encompassed their own

## STRAY THOUGHTS ON ISLAM

downfall by digressing from these principles ; and a study of Islam can only be effected by a study of the Qur-án, not by observing the practices of the misguided ones.

### **Flogging and Cutting off of Hands**

In the light of present-day Civilisation, flogging and the cutting off of hands for crimes appear both barbarous and cruel ; yet it has not been considered possible in the civilised West to allow the aggrieved parties in murder cases to choose and accept “ blood-money ” which Islam permits, instead of insisting on capital punishment for the murderers.

There is some sense, no doubt, in pleading for a more lenient treatment of criminals by sending them to prison instead of flogging them or cutting off their hands ; but criminal records tend to show that the leniently treated criminal, in many cases, takes the mean advantage of repeating his crimes to the end of his life. Islam regards flogging and the cutting off of hands only as extreme punishments for criminals who, on the evidence, prove themselves to be a menace to the peace of Society. Much, of course, depends on the circumstances of each individual case.

As regards “ blood-money ” this is definitely for the relatives or dependents of the murdered person to decide, and not for the State ; because, in some cases, the loss, by murder, of a sole bread-winner to an old and helpless parent, for example, is hardly compensated by the hanging of the murderer ! The strict law of “ a life for a life ” demands that capital punishment be inflicted, but the murderer’s death cannot help the poor and aged parent to supply him or her with the necessaries of life. At any rate, it is the aggrieved person who should know best what is good for him or her ; and so Islam affords him or her the choice.

# LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL-ALLAH

BY THE HONOURABLE MR. M. T. AKBAR, K.C.

## VII.

(Continued from Volume XXV, page 67.)

When Bernard Shaw ridiculed the idea that the Holy Qur-án was a revelation from God and when in his inimitable manner he referred to the Angel Gabriel as a celestial postman between our Prophet and Allah he little knew that he was attacking the very foundation on which his own salvation (if he believes in it) depends. Similarly when Professor Nicholson, too, cast doubts on the prophetic endowment of the Prophet of Islam, there was a deep purpose in the method adopted by Almighty God to reveal to humanity the very last of His Revelations. The Holy Qur-án is unique in that it is the only Revelation of God which purports to be from God Himself direct. It is in the first person and not in the third. The Holy Book contains the *ipissima verba* of Allah Himself and it was revealed over a period of 23 years in the Arabic language in the choicest diction imaginable,—why? Surely the Holy Book was meant to be kept on record for ever as a constant reminder to humanity of God's unbounded mercy to man. In the very first verse revealed to the Prophet there is an indication of the spread of knowledge through the medium of writing and reading. No longer were the precious words of God to depend on the treacherous memory of man, but they were to be written, printed and spread abroad. No more can the words of God be altered, forged, suppressed or destroyed. From another aspect, the Holy Book is the *Magna Charta* of mankind and God Himself repeatedly says in the Qur-án that He never breaks His promise. If God is the Almighty Creator that He undoubtedly is, which fact is being steadily demonstrated

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to the world by science, and human beings are in reality absolutely powerless and at the mercy of God, Who could deal with us as He pleases, will there be any purpose in, or incentive to, man, to be good, to be virtuous and to do good? The whole of nature seems to be merciless, cruel, ruthless, red-toothed and red-clawed and

“ We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.”

Allah says, in a terrible passage in the Holy Book, that if He were to punish man for his wickedness He would destroy every living creature in the universe. Incidentally this passage indicates three things: it emphasizes the fact that wickedness is rampant in man and that God is merciful and forbearing and further that man is the head of all creation and that every other creature is subservient to men and depends on man. In another terrible passage Allah, referring to the so-called divinity of Jesus Christ, says that if He pleases He could destroy Jesus Christ, his mother and the whole universe. Was it not then a mercy to the whole of humanity that Allah, the Almighty, the One without a peer, put down on record His promise to reward the righteous, the pure, the doer of good not once, but ten times over and in some places seventy times over and His promise to give man more happiness from His own Presence? Says the Qur-án—“ Who is he that will lend unto Allah a goodly loan, that He may double it for him and his may be a rich reward?” “ On the day when thou (Muhammad) wilt see the believers, men and women, their light shining forth before them and on their right hands (and wilt hear it said unto them): Glad news for you this day: Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein ye are immortal; that is the supreme triumph.” (57 : 11 and 12.)

Was it not for this reason that our Holy Prophet was called in the Qur-án as a mercy to the whole universe, because Allah's promise was conveyed to his heart and it was his lip which gave utterance to this solemn promise of God to the whole of humanity? (21 : 107.) Our Holy Prophet was the trustee and suppose he, instead of promulgating God's promise to mankind, had kept it all to himself? Is there any other scripture in the whole world where any similar promise is on record in the very words of God? Is it not significant that God Himself says in the Holy Qur-án that He Himself will be the guardian of the Book and preserve it intact? Can my readers now conceive what the Qur-án means to us Muslims and what it should mean to men like Shaw, Nicholson, Zwemer and other learned pundits? To take but one passage, in the chapter "Luqman" God says: "O My dear son! Lo! though it (a man's deed or act) be but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and though it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Lo! Allah is Subtle, Aware."

"O my dear son! Establish worship and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity, and persevere whatever may befall thee. Lo! that is of the steadfast heart of things.

"Turn not thy cheek in scorn towards folk, nor walk with pertness in the land. Lo! Allah loveth not each braggart boaster.

"Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo! the harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass." (31 : 16 to 19.)

The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass. In this contest, can any moral be more pointed?

I sometimes wonder whether it has ever occurred to these professors, and learned men who believe in God, that if the Qur-án was a colossal sham and a forgery, God Himself was powerful enough to destroy it and

suppress it, especially as it purported to be words direct from Him. Would the Omnipotent God allow it to be preserved so as to be a perpetual thorn in the sides of these learned men, for 1,354 years, with a so-called promise from Him to make the religion of Islam prevail over all other religions, including their own religion ?

“ He it is Who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions ; and Allah is enough for a witness.” (48 : 28.) The word “ prevail ” does not imply that it will be an immediate process. All the processes of nature are very slow, from the point of view of relative time, but they are terribly sure. The Qur-án refers to itself as the truth, in several passages (see 18 ; 29—16 ; 102—5 ; 48).

In chapter 21, verse 112, on the day of judgment our Holy Prophet will ask God to judge mankind according to the Truth. The definite article “ the ” in the words “ the Truth ” can only mean according to the promise of God as recorded in the Qur-án, the Book of the Truth. No man or woman, including professors, can then plead in defence that they were ignorant of the law, on the ground that the law had not been promulgated in an accessible form. Those who believe in God can then rely on the following verse for justice :

“ Surely those who believe and those who are Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them nor shall they grieve.” (2 : 62.)

As Maulana Muhammad Ali points out in note 104 of his translation, “ Salvation cannot be attained by mere lip profession by the Muslims, nor by any other people unless they adhere to a true belief and good actions. As to those who stick to their own religions we are told in 22 : 17 that “ Allah will judge between them on the day of

resurrection." The existence of good men in other religions is not denied in the Holy Qur-án, but perfect peace, or the state of absolute contentment which is indicated by freedom from grief and fear, is obtainable only in Islam, because Islam alone is the religion of "absolute submission to the Divine Being" (Muhammad Ali's translation, page 37). "Yea! whoever submits [*aslama*] himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others) he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve." (2 : 112.)

Chapter 3, verses 83 and 84 are as follows: "Say: We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.

"And whoever desires a religion other than Islam it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers."

The religion of Islam which alone is acceptable to God, although the good actions of any person who belongs to any other religion will not go unrewarded, is to be found in the Holy Qur-án, the Hadith, the practice of the Prophet and the *Shariat* and it is this *Shariat* which Allah indicates in 3 : 30 we Muslims must follow if we are to attain to Allah's love. The Holy Prophet's *sunnah* and his laws must be followed completely before a Muslim can call himself a true Muslim. What this submission in Islam amounts to is set forth by E. M. Forster in "Abinger Harvest" where he describes the profound effect created in his mind by the silent unostentatious withdrawal of a group of Muslims for their sunset prayers from the midst of a wedding reception:

"Before the Maulvi finished a gramophone began, and before that was silent a memorable act took place.

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The sun was setting, and the orthodox withdrew from us to perform their evening prayer. They gathered on the terrace behind, to the number of twenty, and prostrated themselves towards Mecca. Here was dignity and unity; here was a great tradition untainted by private judgment; they had not retained so much and rejected so much; they had accepted Islam unquestioningly, and the reward of such an acceptance is beauty. There was once a wedding in England where a talented lady, advanced, but not too advanced, rewrote her daughter's marriage service. Bad there, the effect was worse in India, where the opportunities for disaster are larger. Crash into the devotions of the orthodox birred the gramophone—

“I'd sooner be busy with my little Lizzie,” and by a diabolic chance reached the end of its song as they ended the prayer. They rejoined us without self-consciousness, but the sun and the snows were theirs, not ours; they had obeyed; we had entered the unlovely chaos that lies between obedience and freedom—and that seems, alas! the immediate future of India.”

In the chapter “Yasin,” verse 36, Allah says, “Glory be to Him who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows and of themselves and of what they do not know.”

“And a sign to them is the night. We draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in the dark.”

Similarly in 43 : 12 and 51 : 49. This reference to the creation of pairs of everything in all that grows from the earth and of themselves and of what they do not know, is one of the profoundest truths in the Qur-án. Scientists have now reduced the whole universe and matter to electricity and mathematics. Even in electricity there is the pair composed of positive and negative electricity. There is a tension between the pair, just as in the case of human lovers, and when the contact is made, the current

of electrons flows from the negative to the positive pole. W. L. Bragg in his electricity lectures says as follows : “ We have agreed to say that a current flows from positive to negative,” this contention having been adopted before anything was known about electrons. Now, the electrons which convey the current are negatively charged and of course flow from negative to positive. When a current is said to be flowing from the positive pole of a battery towards the negative pole, actually electrons are running in the opposite direction.” So that it will be seen that the electrons which are the progeny of the marriage of the two kinds of electricity proceed from the negative pole or the female of the species. The two kinds of electricity exist in everything in this universe and can be separated by the expenditure of energy, for example, by rubbing a piece of amber with a silk cloth. The energy expended results in the creation of the electrical energy between the positive and negative electricity. The passage from the Chapter “ Yasin ” quoted by me above shows that in the case of the night and day, the two exist together and that the night is drawn forth from the day. Now Allah says : He has created everything in pairs in this world, including things of which we know nothing. In chapter 51, verses 20 and 21, Allah says, “ And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure. And [also] in yourselves ; will you not then see ?” Within man’s self the one thing that strikes one forcibly is the stream of unending thoughts, and mental images which flow unceasingly. As this stream is similar to a stream of electrons or a flow of electric current, it must be the product of a pair within one’s self. If a person reflects profoundly by delving deep within himself on the origin of this flow of thought, he will notice the male and the female elements within himself and that the thoughts flow from the female part as a result of the union between the female part and the male part. When the female element of man’s self

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is in union with the outside world, the result is the procreation of thoughts which give rise to fear, doubt, anxiety, anger, hatred, envy and other undesirable emotions in man.

In ordinary life, man never effects a union between the true male part of himself and the female part, and the male element is left dormant and unexercised. The marriage effected is an illegitimate one with a mate which is not its proper mate. In the words of the Qur-án, when such a union takes place the female element follows the wish and desire of *Taghut* or the outside world (2 : 256.) The children born are the children of *Taghut* and the result is this vale of tears, in which we groan and live and have our being. That is why the Holy Qur-án insists on man being preoccupied not with the world but with the thought of God, the Haqiqat-i-Muhammadiyah, the Zikr Allah, which brings self-possession to the mind.

Let me quote from "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" by that great modern poet, W. B. Yeats. As the poem is too long to quote in its entirety, I will content myself with the speech of the Soul :

" My soul. I summon to the winding ancient stair ;

Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,  
Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,  
Upon the breathless starlit air,  
Upon the star that marks the hidden pole ;  
Fix every wandering thought upon  
That quarter where all thought is done :  
Who can distinguish darkness from the soul ?

My soul. Why should the imagination of a man  
Long past his prime remember things that are  
Emblematical of love and war ?  
Think of ancestral night that can,  
If but imagination scorn the earth  
And intellect its wandering  
To this and that and t'other thing,  
Deliver from the crime of death and birth.

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My soul. Such fullness in that quarter overflows  
And falls into the basin of the mind  
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,  
For intellect no longer knows  
*Is from the Ought or Knower from the Known—*  
That is to say, ascends to Heaven ;  
Only the dead can be forgiven ;  
But when I think of that my tongue's a stone."

Says Allah in the Qur-án, "Remember Me and I will remember thee." (2 : 152.)

Let me here quote three passages from the " Tarjuma Al-Ashwaq " of Muhyuddin Ibn-i-Arabi :

" Her solitude is her looking on herself, for God says, ' Neither My earth nor My heaven contains Me, but I am contained by the heart of My servant who is a believer.' "

" Two opposites " referring to the story of Junayd, when a man sneezed in his presence and said, "*God be praised.*" (Kor. i : 1). Junayd said, completing the verse, "*Who is the Lord of created beings.*" The man replied, " And who is the created being, that he should be mentioned in the same breath with God ? " " O my brother," said Junayd, " the phenomenal, when it is joined to the Eternal, vanishes and leaves no trace behind. When He is there, thou art not, and if thou art there, He is not." He refers to the saying of Abu Said al-Kharraz, who, on being asked how he knew God, answered, " By His uniting two opposites, for *He is the First and the Last and the Outward and the Inward.*" (Kor. lvii : 3.)

## ISLAM OF AND FOR HUMANITY

BY MR. G. H. HEMANI.

A religion that is to regulate the life of a people and, at the same time, to lead an advanced humanity on to the purest ideals, must be in itself both practical and ideal. To be practical, and thus mould the life of the people, it must find expression in the midst of the everyday activities of mankind.

Now Muslims, at all stages are alive to Islam, and Islam is *An-Nur*, The Light, to the world. This may be gathered from the religious expressions and principles woven into the life of a Muslim. *As-Salam 'alaikum*—"May peace be with you"—is the constant greeting of one Muslim to another and so the idea of peace continually finds practical expression in good wishes, and thus upholds the ideal of peace. And how can one have, or be at, peace unless he is at peace with his Creator and His creatures?

*Azan* or *Prayer Call*.—This is an appeal from a human soul to the soul of humanity to turn to Allah—appealing in a far greater degree than the tolling of the deepest toned bell, or the most costly and elaborate system of chimes. What a noble call!

"Allah is the Greatest.

I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but Allah.

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.

Come to prayer.

Come to success.

Allah is the Greatest.

There is no god but Allah."

*Prayer*.—In Islam the inherent equality of man is practically demonstrated at prayers, where high and low

meet on the basis of equality, and on the same floor, and make supplication to the Giver and Guide to all.

Prayer is a practical training ground for a righteous life and, ideally, a spiritual elevation; for the human soul is nourished on prayer. The prayer-call, five times a day, in the midst of a man's every day business, gives him in the work-a-day world, the occasions necessary for keeping spiritually fit, and *Zikr*—contemplation—leaves the individual to give vent to the yearnings of his soul in the terms of his spiritual aspirations before his Beloved. The call "Come to prayer," "Come to success," signifies success through prayer, success in being at one with the Beloved.

*Fasting*.—To govern the empire of Self, a disciplined control of the inclinations is necessary, and fasting is most efficient means to this end. To give a simple instance, "over-eat oneself" is not an uncommon expression; but to abstain from food within the prescribed hours, not for a day but a month, provides enough practice to gain complete mastery over this inclination; and, for one who keeps fasts, it strikingly suggests and indeed enjoins the restraint of undue and undesirable inclinations. The utility of fasting both as a spiritual incentive and a means of physical well-being, is generally appreciated and recognised.

*Zakat* or *the poor-tax*.—It is in principle and practice the most humane doctrine. It consists of an equal share,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., given by all for the common good, and to propagate the ideals of the fraternity. It relates to, and deals with, the needy, the welfare of the fraternity, the upkeep of mosques, and all purposes in the way of Allah. The utility of the system of *Zakat* and its application in its broadest sense can, in conjunction with Islamic teachings, bring about the world social-state for which mankind is yearning.

## ISLAM OF AND FOR HUMANITY

*Haj* or *Pilgrimage*.—This is an international congregation at Mecca of all schools of Muslim thought, with all the apparent advantages of such a congregation. A living Islamic Brotherhood is experienced when the pilgrims enter into the state of pilgrimage, when the search for a king-man, rich man, poor man, workman, is in vain, since all the worldly ranks of mankind are dissolved in the Brotherhood of Islam. All dress alike, and are subject to the same conditions. All the pilgrims merge as man, the lover, in search of his Beloved. *La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah*—"There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah." The ennobling doctrine of One Allah at once establishes this universal brotherhood. The acceptance of this doctrine can harmonise the relations between the communities of a country, and between different countries, as links in the chain of human brotherhood. It may be remarked that it is indeed regrettable that the communalist Indian Mussalmans claim political rights as Mussalmans, when submission to the all-inspiring doctrine of One Allah leaves them the inheritors of Islam; and apart from being Muslims, they are creatures of Allah on the same level as non-Mussalmans, that is, men.

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RELIGION OF JESUS AND PAULINE  
CHRISTIANITY

The Jewish factors in his creed were his belief in one God—he never put Christ quite on an equality with the Father ; his oriental prejudice against the symbolic worship of images ; his firm conviction of the “ righteousness ” of God ; and the importance which he gives to history, whether past or future.

His belief in the approaching end of the age and in the return of Christ to earth was evidently fading in his later epistles ; but he never consciously abandoned it, though Messianism meant very little outside Palestine. Ever since St. Paul, the Church has wavered between the late Jewish belief in the resurrection of the body and the Greek (Orphic) belief in the immortality of the soul, or rather it has tried, not very successfully, to combine them.

The Greek element in his faith had, of course, nothing to do with the official cult of the Olympian gods. It belonged rather to the mystery religions which pervaded the Mediterranean world.

These were confraternities which participated in sacred rites, usually guarded by vows of secrecy. Their chief characteristics were ceremonies of purification, which by some were interpreted magically ; the promise of spiritual communion with some deity, often a dying and rising saviour, whose life is sacramentally imparted to his worshippers ; and thirdly, the hope of immortality, which is assured to those who are initiated.

But, nevertheless, it was as a mystery religion that Europe accepted Christianity ; mystery is the Greek word which the Latins rendered, poorly enough, by their word sacrament. All this very essential part of St. Paul's Gospel had nothing to do with Palestinian Judaism. The later epistles are full of the technical terms of the mysteries, which a Greek writer, in sympathy with this type of religion, could hardly avoid.—DEAN INGE, *in the course of an*

## CORRESPONDENCE

*article published in the Evening Standard of 16th September, 1936.*

So we are told on the authority of one of the greatest dignitaries of the English Church that St. Paul had to introduce a lot of Greek mysticism into the simple Jewish monotheism preached by Jesus to make it popular among the Gentiles. One is tempted to ask :

“ Was not the doctrine of the Trinity also one of these pagan ingredients in the Greco-Judaic cult so cleverly concocted by this Apostle of the Gentiles ? ”

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## CORRESPONDENCE

VILLA ROAD, MID-HIGHAM,  
KENT.

THE IMAM,  
THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE.  
DEAR SIR,

I regret to say that, unfortunately, I did not receive your kind invitation to the celebration of the festival of Id-ul-Fitr on Tuesday, 15th December, until yesterday morning, as I have been away from home, and my wife was uncertain of my address, so did not forward the card.

I should have tried to be with you had I been aware that I had been invited. It is pleasant to know that you have not forgotten me since I wrote, and, on my part, I can say that I have read and delighted in the translation of the Holy Qur-án, and the pamphlets you have sent me, and found great help and comfort in them.

I have lived a few years in the East and thought I knew quite a lot about the Muslim Faith, but now when I am studying it seriously I find it very small, and yet I feel sure that having read the translation of the Holy Qur-án thoroughly, I shall find happiness in the Faith of Islam, and I would like you to tell me how I should make that declaration.

Perhaps, it would be better for me to have more instruction in the details of the fasts and celebrations, the correct manner of prayer, and other facts, and I should appreciate assistance from you in these matters.

It is my earnest intention, when I return to my ship, to request to see the Captain to change my religious denomination to Muslim, but I hope to hear from you prior to that, and to know how I must make my declaration of Faith.

Hoping you will excuse this short letter, and give me your advice on the matters in question. I will close, hoping to hear from you in the near future, and remaining,

Yours sincerely,  
F. W. B.

23rd December 1936.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### BOOK REVIEWS

*The Testament of Man Edited by Arthur Stanley.*

(Published by Messrs. Victor Gollanz, Ltd., London, 1936:  
pp. 662. Price 7s. 6d.)

The book is a sort of survey of the spiritual history of man. The Editor has laboriously collected from all available sources the expression of the divine in man. According to him it is a universal phenomenon and has an endless variety. To use his own words: "The divinity of man sometimes breaks out in unexpected places, and the gift of fellowship, chivalry and self-sacrifice is not confined to any time or any class. Hence the reader will meet not only the saint, the prophet, the philosopher and the reformer, but also the explorer, the rebel and the ordinary man." Accordingly, he has placed selections from the Scriptures like the Qur-án and the Bible side by side with the writings of other kinds of genius in human history.

We agree with the Editor that the divine feeling in man is universal. But we cannot agree with him when he thinks that the spiritual experiences of religious personalities is of the same nature and value as the experiences of others. The fact is that whenever the divine in man flares up in the case of a non-religious genius it is in the environment of his physical emotion and is in consequence mixed with this alloy, in the case of a religious genius such a flash is preceded by an absolute self-surrender on the part of the man, and as such is free from the alloy of the matter. It is for this reason that, as distinguished from other geniuses, religious personalities not only stir up the divine and the heroic in man, but also succeed in instilling into the minds of people that sense of resignation without which no achievement can bring any real happiness either to the person concerned or to humanity at large.

## BOOK REVIEWS

With this much of criticism we must hasten to congratulate the Editor on the vision which has inspired the production of the present volume. It is the vision of the universal providence of God for man, the denial of which, to the great misfortune of humanity, is increasingly becoming the characteristic feature of modern civilization.

*Desert Encounter By Knud Holmboe. Translated  
from the Danish by Helga Holbek.*

(Published by Messrs. George G. Harrap & Company,  
Ltd., London, 1936 : pp. 282, with 61 Illustrations.  
Price 9s.)

The late Mr. Knud Holmboe is well known to the readers of the *Islamic Review*. The reason for his change of faith from Christianity to Islam appeared in the October 1931 issue of this journal. By nationality he was a Dane, and his Islamic name was Ali Ahmad. His undaunted spirit of adventure was second to none among those Westerners who have earned a name for Eastern exploration. What is more, he was a prolific writer and a great propagandist. He was thus a great acquisition to the rising tide of Islam in the West. It was an irreparable loss to the Muslim world when, towards the end of 1931, his promising life was cut short by Arab brigands, a few miles south of Akaba, where he was waiting for his visa for the Hedjaz, where he wanted to go for his pilgrimage. It is an irony of fate that he should be killed at the hands of Arabs in defending whose cause he had suffered so much. But as the criminals of the world belong to no community, and as like everything else the spirit of adventure does at times demand too high a price, no one is to blame in this case, and the only thing we can do is to ascribe it to fate.

The present volume is a graphic account of the author's adventurous journey through Italian Africa. The experiences recorded are mostly with regard to a people

the embers of whose spiritual powers, though buried deep under poverty, illiteracy and political repression, would yet appear to a seeker after truth as the only hope of humanity. He found these people attempting almost vainly to exert their powers to exist as an honourable people against a European Imperialist nation, whose methods of administration appeared to him a disgrace to European politics. It is possible that he felt so intensely about the situation because he happened to be a co-religionist of the sufferers. But the fact remains that the attitude of a twentieth-century Christian nation towards these Muslim peoples, as shown by these narratives, in no way differs from the attitude of the Christian barbarians of the Middle Ages towards their contemporary Muslim nations. We only hope things have since undergone a change for the better. A peculiarity of this book is that on the background of political accounts, the author presents to us an interesting history of his own spiritual transformation. From this point of view, the book is of absorbing interest to thoughtful Muslims. It is of great value to those Muslims particularly who cannot understand how the materialistic West can appreciate the beauty of the spiritual culture of Islam, surrounded as it is at present with depressing material conditions. On the other hand this particular aspect of the book makes it also extremely useful to such of the Westerners as are trying to appreciate Islam as a moral and a spiritual value.

We wish the book every success in its noble mission.

A. D. A.

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## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

**ISLAM : THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means : (1) Peace ; (2) the way to achieve peace ; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-ÂN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-ân. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-ân, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil ; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number : (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead-letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of person. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

**SEVERAL PAGES  
ARE MISSING  
FROM THIS  
BOUND VOLUME**

